



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
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Memo from
JOSHUA LEDERBERG

To:
Sen. Kennedy

February 19, 1971

P.S.

I was a member of the Yarborough panel; but
these views are my own

Hon. Edward Kennedy
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Kennedy:

In reference to your bill on the National Cancer
Authority, S. 34, may I transmit the attached comments?

They were motivated, in part, by some of the cri-
ticisms on which you remarked in your letter to Mr.
Benno Schmidt. I believe most of them are readily
answered, but to do so requires a less simplistic
analysis of the problem than the slogan
"CURE CANCER".

Some of my scientific colleagues have been critical
about singling cancer out for special treatment in a
separate executive agency. They fear that this may
result in a degradation of scientific standards in the
selection of projects, or too narrow an approach to
the cancer problem in a way that may be self-defeating.
These fears might be minimized if the proposed Board
had a more firmly established responsibility, closer
to that of the existing National Advisory Health
Councils, but with clearer authority to delegate.
For example, in accord with the legislation governing
the NIH, the Board should have the responsibility of
approving every grant or contract. But to make this
responsibility an effective one, the act should also
provide that the Board may authorize appropriate pro-
cedures by which such grants might be consummated
without requiring individual approval.

Some of these points are amplified in the article.

Yours sincerely,

LT. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY, JR. LABORATORIES FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE
dedicated to the study of mental retardation

Molecular Biology Heredity Neurobiology Developmental Medicine